



## Senator David Long

200 W. Washington St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

News from the Indiana State Senate

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## News You Can Use Government Programs Help Seniors Get Prescription Drugs

There are high costs involved in bringing prescription drugs to the open market. Part of that price tag is passed on to consumers, which is a hardship for patients who do not have drug coverage.

Older Hoosiers spend an average of more than \$1,000 per year for prescription drugs. The state and federal governments have developed several programs designed to provide affordable prescription drugs for low-income seniors.

The federal government has launched a new drug discount card. Medicare will be providing reliable and accessible information. Anyone enrolled in Medicare Part A or Part B and not receiving Medicare benefits is eligible for the discount drug card program. For more information or to become enrolled, you may call **1-800-MEDICARE** (1-800-633-4227) or visit [www.medicare.gov](http://www.medicare.gov).

HoosierRx is a state program that helps shift the cost of prescription drugs away from low-income seniors. HoosierRx was enacted four years ago by the General Assembly and allows seniors who qualify to receive a 75 percent discount on the cost of medications. This program will be coordinated with the Medicare discount drug card to maximize savings. Low-income seniors can sign up for the HoosierRx Drug Card by calling, toll-free, **1-866-267-4679** or by visiting [www.in.gov/HoosierRx](http://www.in.gov/HoosierRx). Local pharmacies will also have applications.

### Additional Resources

Leaders from the prescription drug industry have joined the government's efforts to ease the financial burden that prescription drugs pose on senior citizens. A number of the major companies now offer their own program for low-income seniors:

#### LillyAnswers

1 (877) RX-LILLY (1-877-795-4559)  
[www.lillyanswers.com](http://www.lillyanswers.com)

#### Merck Patient Assistance Program

1 (800) 727-5400  
[www.merck.com/pap/pap/consumer/](http://www.merck.com/pap/pap/consumer/)

#### Pfizer Share Card

1 (800) 717-6005  
[www.pfizersharecard.com](http://www.pfizersharecard.com)

#### Together Rx

1 (800) 865-7211  
[www.together-rx.com](http://www.together-rx.com)

For a complete directory of prescription drug patient assistance programs, visit [www.helpingpatients.org](http://www.helpingpatients.org) or call 1 (800) 762-4636.



I serve the citizens  
of Senate District 16,  
which includes  
the city of Fort Wayne  
and Southwest Allen County.

Stay connected  
to the Indiana General Assembly  
by visiting  
[www.in.gov/legislative](http://www.in.gov/legislative)

You can also visit  
my legislative web site at:

[www.in.gov/S16](http://www.in.gov/S16)

Send letters to:  
**Sen. David Long**  
**Indiana Senate**  
**200 W. Washington St.**  
**Indianapolis, IN 46204**

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### Commission Studies Methods To Replace Property Tax

"We want a better system," and "Do no harm," were the sentiments echoed in the Property Tax Replacement Study Commission, which has met several times at the Statehouse. The property tax situation in Indiana is a frustration shared by many as the newly-formed committee, consisting of legislators, farmers, businessmen, and homeowners, develops methods to reduce local government's reliance on property taxes.

The reassessment process is complete in 90 counties. Agencies and organizations are collecting data that will aid the commission and the legislature in figuring ways to replace over \$5.5 billion in property taxes collected each year and to provide oversight of over 9,000 levies and 172 different types of funds for local government programs and services.

This monumental task is being conducted due to a law passed during the 2004 legislative session. The committee must study the effects

of eliminating 50 percent, 75 percent, and 100 percent of net property tax levies.

One major hurdle for the commission is to identify revenue sources capable of replacing property taxes and providing sufficient revenue to maintain essential government services. The commission will submit status reports to the Legislative Council, which is the administrative body of the General Assembly, in September.

The commission broke down into small groups that will work on five major issues during the year: Property Tax Administration Issues; Local Government Services; Long Term Debt Issues; Other State Tax Systems; and Property Tax Levies and Controls.

The goal is to lessen local governments' dependence upon property taxes and create a fairer and more equitable system funding local government.

### Stay Informed

View meeting minutes and notices at  
<http://www.in.gov/legislative/interim/committee/ptrc.html>

### Code Adam Program: Another Tool for Missing Children

Due to the success of the Amber Alert program in Indiana, legislators are exploring additional ways to expand emergency alert programs designed to find missing children. One of these programs is called the **Code Adam program**, named in memory of 6-year-old Adam Walsh, who was abducted from a Florida shopping mall and murdered in 1981. Since its creation in 1994, it has been a powerful, preventive tool against child abductions and lost children in more than 45,000 establishments across the nation.

When a customer reports a missing child to an employee, an alert with a brief description of the child is announced over the building's public-address system. All designated employees search for the child and monitor exits to help prevent the child from leaving the establishment. If the child is not returned within 10 minutes, the local police department is contacted for assistance, and if neces-

sary, an Amber Alert is issued.

This is one more step that a community can take to ensure a child's safe return. Several states have enacted legislation to establish protocol in state buildings and encourage retail stores to adopt this program. According to the **National Center for Missing & Exploited Children** (NCMEC), Code Adam alerts are issued in federal and state office buildings, museums, libraries, amusement parks and hospitals around the nation.

Hoosiers should be pleased with the success of the national and state-wide Amber Alert programs in locating two children in the last eight months. Code Adam is another resource in the fight to keep our children safe. For more information, including how a business can start the Code Adam program, please contact NCMEC at (703)274-3900 or visit [www.missingkids.com](http://www.missingkids.com).



## THE "DO NOT CALL" LIST UPGRADED



Indiana is one of 40 states that has the means to protect citizens against unwanted and unsolicited phone calls. In 2001, the Indiana General Assembly passed the "Telephone Privacy Program," which provides consumers the opportunity to avoid telemarketer calls at home. **State Senator David Long** was the author of the bill creating the "do not call" list.

The **Indiana Telephone Privacy Program** allows Hoosiers to put their home telephone numbers on a "do not call" list. This list is updated quarterly and distributed to telemarketing companies. These companies can face hefty fines if they are in violation of Indiana guidelines. Getting your name on this "do not call" list is surprisingly easy. To enroll, simply call the toll-free number (1-888-834-9969) or visit the Attorney General Steve Carter's website at [www.in.gov/attorneygeneral/telephone](http://www.in.gov/attorneygeneral/telephone).

Because this program is relatively new, there are still a few kinks that need to be worked out. For example, now that telemarketers are unable to reach you at home, they are looking for another outlet. Later this year, a wireless subscriber directory sponsored by the Cellular Telecommunications and Internet Association, will be published. It is speculated that this directory will include about 75 percent of all mobile phone numbers and will be accessible by real estate agents, telemarketers and other on-the-go professionals.

The federal government also is addressing this issue with legislation that will prevent wireless-phone companies from automatically distributing cell numbers into this directory. To prevent your mobile phone number from being distributed, you should add it to Indiana's "do not call" list.



## F.A.Q.

### Frequently Asked Questions About Indiana's Legislature

**Q:** Why is the Indiana General Assembly called a "citizen legislature?"

**A:** Indiana lawmakers spend only a few months each year at the Capitol. The rest of the year, each legislator lives and works in the district he or she represents. Our part-time legislature offers substantial savings to Indiana taxpayers. The National Conference of State Legislatures ranks Indiana 45 among the 50 states with regard to the expenditures of the legislature per capita. Less than one half of one percent of the state's General Fund budget is spent on the legislature.

**Q:** Where is the money generated from gaming profits, such as the Hoosier Lottery, river boats, pari-mutuel, etc., going?

**A:** Of the \$670 million of the state's share of gaming profits in 2003, \$294 million was dedicated to the Property Tax Replacement Fund to help subsidize homeowners' local property tax bills through payment of homestead credits. The second-largest share, \$236 million, cuts the "license plate tax," the excise tax Indiana motorists pay annually when renewing their vehicle license plates. Annual savings can be as much as 50 percent.

**Q:** How does the General Assembly function when it is not in session?

**A:** The Legislative Council is composed of 16 legislators, including the speaker of the House, president pro tempore, and floor leaders of the majority and minority parties. The Council is designed to provide an interim coordination structure for the General Assembly. Created in 1967 by combining and expanding existing legislative service agencies, the Council assists the General Assembly through its selection of interim study committees, research, fiscal analysis, and bill drafting staff. The study committees meet throughout the year during the time the state legislature is not in session.

**Q:** How does a senator author a bill?

**A:** A senator takes an idea for a bill to the non-partisan Legislative Services Agency. The staff provides necessary legal, fiscal, and research capabilities for the General Assembly. Drafting legislation, compiling and publishing the rules and regulations of state agencies, assisting committees during the interim and session, and furnishing figures on the estimated cost of existing or proposed state services are among the tasks performed by LSA staff.



## State Faces Tough Budget Decisions in 2005

### Indiana Personal Income Lags the Nation

On July 12, the state closed the books for Fiscal Year 2004. According to official figures released by the State Budget Agency, the state is expected to have a "surplus" or "reserve" of just \$300 million on June 30, 2005 – the close of the current budget cycle. As shown on **Figure 1**, this means the state's reserve will have declined by nearly \$2 billion since 1998.

The problem is that state spending has been exceeding state revenues for the past several years. State revenue collections actually decreased in both Fiscal Years 2001 and 2002 before showing a 0.5 percent increase in 2003. Revenue collections

increased by about 2.7 percent for Fiscal Year 2004, the year that just ended.

In order to avoid big spending cuts in education and health care, the state has been using the surplus and employing spending delays and other temporary solutions. These measures make it possible for the state to spend nearly \$800 million more than it will collect this year. While there is nothing inherently wrong with these accounting measures – they have helped the state avoid big spending cuts in our schools – these measures are only one-time temporary fixes and cannot be sustained. So, while it may seem like Indiana's economy is improving,



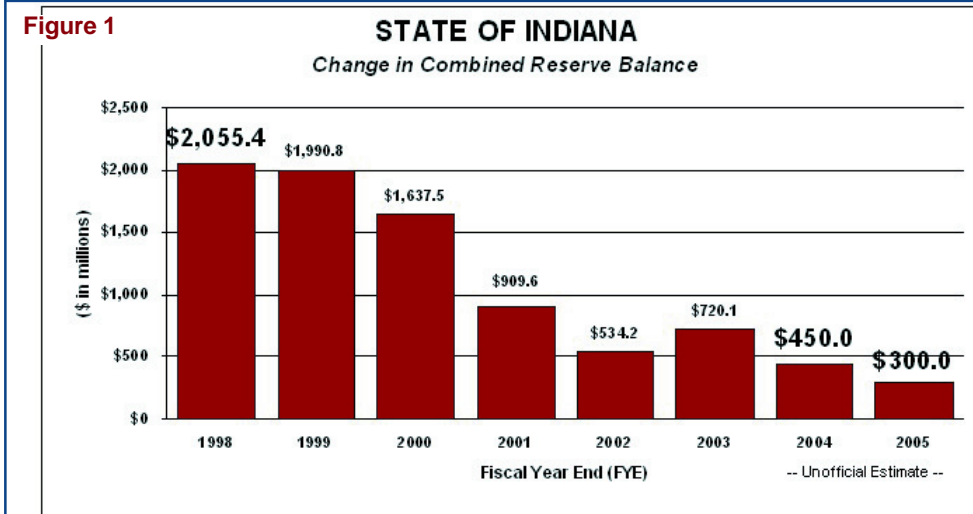
the state's financial condition actually remains very weak.

A \$300 million reserve sounds like a lot of money. But with an annual \$11.2 billion General Fund Budget, including big items such as \$4.3 billion for K-12 education, \$2.1 billion for local property tax relief, \$1.4 billion for universities and \$1.2 billion for Medicaid, \$300 million really is not a sufficient reserve. In fact, the State Budget spends more than \$30 million per day every day of the year. A \$300 million reserve barely funds 10 days of expenses.

The root of Indiana's budget problems is slow revenue growth. Part of the problem is job loss due to the recession. But the real problem is that Indiana lags the nation in personal income growth. As reflected in **Figure 2**, the problem has steadily grown since 1996. Today, the average Hoosier worker earns only about 91 cents for every \$1.00 earned by the average worker nationwide. Just as Hoosier workers earn less, state tax revenues lag as well. If Indiana workers earned the same as the national average, the subsequent gain in tax revenues would erase the state's structural deficit. Indiana needs to improve its economy relative to the nation or Indiana's budget – and the ability to adequately fund priorities like education and health care – will remain a problem.

Beginning in January, the General Assembly will start work on the state budget for the next biennium. Much of the discussion will center on adequate funding for education and health care. But, it is equally important to continue to try to find ways to diversify the economy and stimulate business investment as the real long term solution to the state's budget dilemma.

**Figure 1**



**Figure 2**

